

DHSS Announces Multiple Coronavirus Cases at a Second Care Facility in Delaware

NEW CASTLE (March 28, 2020) – The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is announcing that a second care facility in Delaware has multiple coronavirus cases.

Six residents of a memory care unit of HarborChase of Wilmington have tested positive for COVID-19, including five who are now hospitalized, according to the Division of Public Health. The current census of that unit is 36. DHSS staff have worked with the assisted-living facility to ensure resident and staff safety. The source of the infection is under investigation.

“Responding to multiple cases of COVID-19 in such facilities is among our greatest concerns,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “The populations who live in these facilities are at the highest risk for COVID-19, based on their age and underlying health conditions. Our DHSS team is working closely with the facility’s staff to make sure that the residents with COVID-19 are isolated from other residents, and that staff follow strict safety protocols regarding care of the individuals with the virus and also screening of all who enter the facility.”

HarborChase is the second care facility in Delaware to have an outbreak of coronavirus cases. On Thursday, DHSS announced the coronavirus-related death of an 86-year-old male resident of Little Sisters of the Poor Jeanne Jugan Residence in Newark and that six additional residents had tested positive for COVID-19. A seventh resident has since tested positive.

On March 13, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued aggressive measures for nursing homes

nationwide to follow with respect to safety at their facilities:

- Restricting all visitors, effective immediately, with exceptions for compassionate care, such as end-of-life situations;
- Restricting all volunteers and nonessential health care personnel and other personnel (i.e. barbers);
- Canceling all group activities and communal dining;
- Implementing active screening of residents and health care personnel for fever and respiratory systems.
- In cases of compassionate care, CMS advises that visitors will be equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, and the visits will be limited to a specific room.

On March 16, DHSS issued further restrictive and specific guidance to all facilities serving older adults, including screening protocols for visitors, requirements for disinfecting rooms, and reinforcing resident and staff hygiene.

Secretary Walker said as difficult as it is for loved ones not to visit residents of long-term care facilities during the coronavirus crisis, those visitor restrictions are in place to help keep vulnerable residents safe. DHSS' Division of Health Care Quality (DHCQ) is continuing to work closely with long-term care facilities in the state to verify that such strong measures are in place at each facility, and if not, to assist them in implementing stronger protocols.

For updates on Delaware's response to the coronavirus crisis, go to de.gov/coronavirus